

February 28, 2022

*Testimony in **OPPOSITION** to HB 5263: An Act Concerning the Processing of Rabbits for Consumption*

Dear Honorable Members of the Commerce Committee:

As an animal advocate and a voter, I strongly oppose HB 5263: An Act Concerning the Processing of Rabbits for Consumption. I do not want taxpayer dollars used to promote the killing of rabbits. Rabbits are smart and sociable animals with unique personalities. They are also popular household pets!

As you may know, public demand has forced many cosmetic companies to eliminate testing on rabbits, and many furriers no longer produce coats made from the pelts of rabbits. Additionally, laws have been passed that disallow sale of commercially bred rabbits in pet stores. A few years ago, when Whole Foods tried selling rabbit meat, vigorous public outcry resulted in the discontinuation of the sale of rabbit meat by Whole Foods and other stores.

Another concern is that if passed, HB 5263 may exacerbate spread of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV), a highly transmissible and fatal disease for wild and domestic rabbits that is spreading across the country.

Considering the threat posed by emerging viruses that can cross the species barrier from animals to humans, Connecticut's Department of Agriculture should be promoting plant-based products, including the expansion of plant-based proteins (and eventually cultivated meat). This would help ensure a greater availability of diverse, safe, and dependable protein sources.

Respectfully submitted,

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